

Pomer-Gentner House  
108 Market Street  
Hermann  
Gasconade County  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-253

HABS  
MO,  
37-HERM  
20-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

POMMER-GENTNER HOUSE

HABS No. MO-253

Location: 108 Market Street, Hermann, Gasconade County, Missouri.

Present Owner: The Brush and Palette Club, 411 Market Street, Hermann, Missouri.

Present Occupant: Museum/Art gallery.

Significance: The largest of Hermann's early houses, the Pommer-Gentner House is the only one of them to show the influence of a national style. The two-and-a-half story, brick house was built for Caroline Pommer in 1840/41. The Federal Style design may have been brought from Philadelphia by Mrs. Pommer.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1840/41. City tax records for the year 1841 show that between 1840 and 1841 the assessed valuation of the property jumped from \$50.00 to \$1,150.00, indicating the construction of a substantial building.
2. Architect: Not known. The wooden trim of the pediment and cornice was designed by Johannes Bohlken, a local architect and former shipbuilder. (Interview)
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Pommer-Gentner House is built on lot 4 Market Street, Hermann, Missouri. The following references to the title of this lot are recorded in the Gasconade County, Missouri Deed Books.

1840 Warranty Deed      Town of Hermann to Caroline D. Pommer  
Date signed: August 1, 1840  
Date filed: September 23, 1840  
Book B Pages 459 and 460  
Consideration: \$50.00

1848 Warranty Deed      Caroline Pommer to Ferdinand Pommer  
Date signed: January 13, 1848  
Date filed: January 14, 1848  
Book G Page 81  
Consideration: \$800.00

- 1856 Warranty Deed Ferdinand Pommer to Link and Lochbuhler  
Date signed: April 28, 1856  
Date filed: May 2, 1856  
Book L Pages 368 and 369  
Consideration: \$1,000.00
- 1863 Letter Christian Lochbuhler to Louis Link and others  
Date signed: April 9, 1863  
Date filed: July 20, 1863  
Book P Page 122  
Note: Lochbuhler approves sale of house for a total of \$1400.00 and gives instructions for care of his share.
- 1863 Warranty Deed Louis Link to Ernest Krech  
Date signed: June 26, 1863  
Date filed: July 24, 1863  
Book P Pages 125 and 126  
Consideration: \$700.00
- 1871 Deed of Trust Ernest Krech to Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company  
Date signed: May 18, 1871  
Date filed: August 3, 1871  
Book X Pages 32, 33, and 34  
Consideration: \$3,000.00 loan at 10%
- 1873 Warranty Deed E. Krech, by Trustee, W. Seely to Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company  
Date signed: May 13, 1873  
Date filed: June 16, 1873  
Book X Page 421
- 1878 Warranty Deed Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company to Julius Vigelahn  
Date signed: April 30, 1878  
Date filed: May 16, 1878  
Book 2 Page 365  
Consideration: \$500.00
- 1878 Warranty Deed Julius Vigelahn to Fred Witte  
Date signed: August 9, 1878  
Date filed: August 9, 1878  
Book Z Page 479  
Consideration: \$1,125.00
- 1878 Warranty Deed Fred Witte to William Klinger  
Date signed: October 8, 1878  
Date filed: October 9, 1878  
Book Z Page 495  
Consideration: \$700.00

- 1882 Warranty Deed William Klinger and wife to Catherine Gentner  
Date signed: August 25, 1882  
Date filed: August 28, 1882  
Book 4 Page 598  
Consideration: \$1,500.00
- 1904 Warranty Deed Gentner Heirs, Alice Gentner, Harry Gentner, Addie Drummond and Fred her husband, Charles Gentner and Bertha his wife, Ida Keller and Paul her husband, Lilly Sturtevant and John her husband, Amelia Trautwein and Ferdinand her husband, Emma Schultz and Paul her husband, and Kate McNulty and Frank her husband to Louis Nolte  
Date signed: December 30, 1904  
Date filed: August 9, 1906  
Book 31 Pages 374 to 378  
Consideration: \$447.60
- 1906 Guardian Deed Nolte, Hy, guardian for Amanda Gentner to Louis Nolte  
Date signed: September 21, 1906  
Date filed: July 31, 1908  
Book 33 Page 414  
Consideration: \$133.35
- 1908 Quit-Claim Deed William Gentner to Louis Nolte  
Date signed: July 31, 1908  
Date filed: July 31, 1908  
Book 34 Page 122  
Consideration: \$1.00
- 1933 Warranty Deed Louise Seymoure, Henry F. Schuetz and Bessie his wife, Fred A. Schuetz and Louisa his wife, Addie Krebs and Henry her husband, Amelia Plattner and Emil her husband, Paul Schuetz and Bertha his wife to Ida Keller  
Date signed: June 30, 1933  
Date filed: December 10, 1934  
Book 64 Page 588  
Consideration: \$1.00
- 1942 Warranty Deed Ida Keller to Hugo Lensing  
Date signed: November 21, 1942  
Date filed: November 25, 1942  
Book 73 Page 300  
Consideration: \$100.00

1954 Warranty Deed      Emil Lensing and Helen his wife, Alva  
Bezold and Gustave her husband, Elda  
Zumsteg and James her husband, Laura  
Tucker, Edna Loehnig and Famous her hus-  
band, John Lensing and Grace his wife,  
Leslie Lensing and Grace his wife,  
William Bezold and Augusta his wife, Oscar  
Lensing and Grace his wife, Bertha  
Grotewiel to The Brush and Palette Club  
Date signed: May 11, 1954  
Date filed: June 14, 1954  
Book 88 Page 416  
Consideration: \$1.00 and other good and  
valuable considerations

4. Original plans and construction: No original plans of the house have been located, however, it does appear in some of the earliest views of Hermann. It is included in the 1860 view of Hermann from the southeast by Edward Robyn, the 1869 view of Hermann from the Missouri River by A. Rutgers, the 1877 view of Hermann from the Missouri River by Edward Robyn, a photograph of the town taken between 1869 and 1877 now in the Hermann Museum, and the Sanborn Perris Insurance Maps of 1898, 1908, and 1917.
5. Alterations and Additions: The Pommer-Gentner House originally may have been a duplex. The major alterations involve the connection of the two parts. Two rooms added at the rear of the house are the only major addition.

Between 1841 and 1869, a one story frame porch or shed was added across the rear of the house.

After 1877, two rooms were added to the rear of the house replacing the porch and giving the house a U-shape. Both rooms extend through the full two stories. The ceilings on both stories of the addition and the floor of the second story rooms are lower than those in the original structure to allow the addition to fit under an extension of the original roof. When these rooms were added, the windows at the rear of the original house were bricked in. The doors connecting the addition to the house on the first floor and the second floor door to the south part of the addition were added. The north part of the addition on the second floor is entered through a door opening onto the U at the rear of the house. Here there originally was an enclosed balcony with a staircase from the first floor level. The stairs and the frame enclosure have been removed leaving only the balcony between the added rooms. The metal balcony railing came from a local bank demolished several years ago. The balcony can also be reached from the hall on the second floor through an added doorway. In the northern room of the addition on the first floor, two doors opening onto the U replace the original single opening.

There are signs of an original interior staircase in the floor of the second story hall. This staircase, on the north wall of the southern room, probably would have blocked the doorway now connecting the north and south parts of the house. Since this doorway has a different moulding than the other openings, and may have been blocked by the staircase, it is probably a later addition.

The front door opens onto a brick paved platform. At the present time, this platform is reached by a stone staircase on its southern side. The staircase and the brick paving of the platform were added by the Brush and Palette Club in 1959 and replace the existing wooden stairs and platform floor which were in a deteriorated condition. Although this platform with stairs on its south side appears in the Sanborn Perris Insurance Maps beginning in 1898, it is not the original arrangement. A photograph (1869-77) in the Hermann Museum shows a wooden platform resting on a mound of earth and reached by two sets of stairs, without railings, perpendicular to the facade, one at the north and one at the south. The basement entrance, on street level at the north end of the facade, apparently was added when the present platform arrangement was adopted between 1877 and 1898.

Both the original building and the addition were first roofed with wooden shingles but now are covered with bent seam sheet metal.

The present interior staircase, against the west wall of the original north room, was added by the Brush and Palette Club in 1956/57. Although it does not belong to the house, it is contemporary with it, coming from a house on lot 14 East Second Street built in 1840/41. This staircase opens into the second floor hall through an existing doorway, which once connected the hall and the northern bedroom. Due to the addition of this staircase, the southwest corner of that bedroom is now closed in. There is a bathroom installed under this added staircase.

The basement, finished for the Chamber of Commerce but never used, has shelves along its walls and a bathroom.

The stairs to the attic were added by the the Brush and Palette Club. The attic was originally reached by a ladder.

The Brush and Palette Club has replaced several of the windows and ceilings and has repaired the trim of the cornice and pediment on the facade.

B. Historical Events and Persons connected with the structure :

Caroline Pommer brought her family to Hermann from Philadelphia during the first two years of settlement. Her husband, a craftsman who made musical instruments, died shortly before the move. In the construction of the Pommer-Gentner House, Mrs. Pommer realized plans that she and her husband had made while still in Philadelphia. Dr. Charles Gentner, a later occupant of the house, was a descendant of Henry Gentner, one

of the very first settlers to arrive in Hermann. Dr. Gentner travelled a great deal. According to a local story, he purchased a mummy on a trip to the Middle East, brought it home to Hermann, and stored it under a bed in the Pommer-Gentner House.

PART II. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. Old Views: 1860 panoramic view of Hermann from Rommel's vineyards (southeast), lithograph by Edward Robyn, Hermann Museum, Old German School House, East Fourth Street and Schiller Street, Hermann, Missouri

1869 bird's eye view of Hermann from the Missouri River, drawn by A. Rutgers, Pommer-Gentner House, 108 Market Street, Hermann, Missouri (owned by The Brush and Palette Club, 411 Market Street, Hermann, Missouri)

1877 panoramic view of Hermann from the Missouri River, lithograph by E. Robyn, Missouri Historical Society, Jefferson Building, St. Louis 12, Missouri (a photograph of this lithograph is in the Hermann Historic District files of the State Planning and Survey Office, Department of Natural Resources, Jefferson City, Missouri)

1869-77 panoramic view of Hermann from the County Courthouse, photograph, Hermann Museum, Old German School House, East Fourth and Schiller Streets, Hermann, Missouri

2. Primary and unpublished sources: City Tax Records, Old City Hall, Market Street, Hermann, Missouri

Deeds, Office of the County Recorder, Gasconade County Courthouse, East First Street between Market and Schiller Streets, Hermann, Missouri

Sanborn Perris Insurance Maps, 1898, 1908, 1917, Third floor east, Elmer Ellis Library, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri

Interview, Mrs. Anna Hesse, August 14, 1975, design of the exterior trim

Interview, Mrs. Anna Hesse, August 20, 1975, alterations and additions, dates of restoration, story of Dr. Gentner's mummy.

Files of the State Planning and Survey Office, Department of Natural Resources, Jefferson City, Missouri

3. Secondary and published sources:

Bek, William, The German Settlement Society of Philadelphia and Its Colony Hermann, (Americana Germanica Press, Philadelphia, Pa.: 1907)

Hesse, Anna, Centenarians of Brick, Wood, and Stone, Hermann, Missouri, (Anna Hesse, 1969).

History of Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, Crawford, and Gasconade Counties, (Goodspeed Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill.; 1888).

Missouri, A Guide to the "Show-Me" State; Writers Program; (Deull, Sloan and Pearce, New York: 1941).

Prepared by: Nanette M. Linderer  
Project Historian  
Summer, 1975

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A 2½ story brick building, the Pommer-Gentner House reflects the Federal style in its plan and detailing. Its Greek Revival front pediment makes it one of Hermann's more pretentious early buildings.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair-good. The north foundation wall is settling, causing cracks in the walls above.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The building is rectangular with two symmetrical rear wings.  
Original building: 19'8" x 38'4"  
Rear Wings: 12'2" x 13'2"
2. Foundations: Uneven coursed, squared limestone rubble walls.
3. Wall construction: 13" thick kiln-dried brick walls laid in Flemish bond. The rear (west) wall is painted white; the others are unpainted.
4. Structural system: Brick perimeter bearing walls with wooden floor joists and roof framing members. First floor joists in the original section are 2½" x 10" boards spaced 16" on center. Rear wing floor joists are 2½" x 8". Rafters are rough-cut 3" x 4" boards, spaced 24" on center. They lead from a rafter plate to a 1" x 6" ridge beam, with no vertical or horizontal bracing.
5. Porches: The stone front steps lead up to a brick-paved stoop, which runs the length of the east wall. A cast iron second floor balcony, cantilevered from the west wall of the main section, between the two wings, replaces an earlier enclosed balcony.



6. Chimneys: Four brick end chimneys.

7. Openings:

- a. Windows: Rectangular six-over-six double hung windows with a variety of heads. Windows on the east wall have plain wooden lintels and sills. The original molded frames of the first floor windows have been covered by flat casings to which shutters were attached at one time. Other windows have metal lintels, flat or segmental brick arches, or plain wooden lintels. A lunette is centered in the front pediment.
- b. Doorways and doors: The two pairs of front doors are framed by pilasters and transoms. Evidence on the casements indicates the existence of shutters at one time. A diagonal beaded plank door is at the entry into the basement.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape: The main section of the house has a parapeted gable running parallel with the front of the building, with a pedimented portico extending over the front stoop. A stone cornice piece begins the parapet on either side of the gable. The rear wings have shed roofs which are continuations (with a change of pitch) of the main roof.
- b. Dormers: Two gabled dormers on the west side of the original section.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

Basement: A partial basement with exterior access is situated under the original section of the house.

First floor: The original building is divided into two rooms, each accessible by a front door. To the west of each room is a one-room addition.

Second floor: The second floor is laid out like the first.

2. Stairways: An open-string wooden staircase on the west wall of the northeast room connects the first and second floors. The enclosed wooden staircase to the attic is a recent addition, replacing an earlier ladder.
3. Flooring: 5"-7" tongue-and-groove hardwood boards. Some of the floors are unpainted; others are painted brown or gray.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Original walls are lath and plaster, either painted or papered. Walls in the rear wings are either plaster or painted beaded boards. Recently installed gypsum board ceilings on the first floor of the original section replace the original plaster ceilings.
5. Doorways and doors: Interior doorways have two-panel doors with plain fieldings. The molded doorway between the rooms on the first floor of the original section is a later addition; the original doorways have flat jambs.
6. Trim: Picture rails line the walls in the first floor in the main building. A hand-planed wooden mantelpiece has been added to the fireplace in the southeast room.
7. Hardware: Cast iron rimlocks with white porcelain knobs.
8. Lighting: Electric fixtures.
9. Heating: Fireplaces are used in the rooms of the original building; stoves in the additions.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The building faces east from the corner of the city block.
2. Outbuildings: A frame garage is located at the rear of the site.

Prepared by: Clayton B. Fraser  
Project Supervisor  
Summer 1975

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Hermann, Missouri, project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey, under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, with cooperation of Historic Hermann, Incorporated. Recording was carried out during the summer of 1975 by Clayton B. Fraser (HABS Washington Office), Project Supervisor; Nanette M. Linderer (University of Missouri at Columbia), Project Historian; and Student Architects Edward C. Freeman (Arizona State University), Jean C. Parker (Columbia University), and Donnie G. Seale (University of Florida). The photographs were taken in April and May 1983, by HABS/HAER Photographer Jet Lowe.

An addendum to:  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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